

KNOWLEDGE OF GOVERNMENT SCHOOL TEACHERS REGARDING DEVELOPMENTAL READINESS

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ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted to assess the knowledge of rural and urban government school teachers of Ludhiana regarding development readiness. The study was based on 100 teachers (i.e. 50 rural and 50 urban) teaching Class – I. The sample was randomly drawn from seven Government Primary Schools purposively selected from rural as well as urban locales of Ludhiana District. Self- Structured Teachers' Knowledge Questionnaire was used to assess the developmental readiness of rural and urban\ government school children. The questionnaire comprised of five open ended questions relating to developmental readiness expected to be achieved by students of Class-I. The comparison between knowledge levels of rural and urban teachers revealed that urban teachers had better knowledge than rural teachers.

KEYWORDS: Developmental Readiness & Knowledge of Teachers

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INTRODUCTION

Developmental readiness is an important aspect for child's successful transition into formal school. It is affected by the early care- nature and nurture and learning experiences they receive from their primary care givers i.e. their parents and family. There are many studies which have contributed to a growing awareness of the importance of the quality early education and primary school experience (UNICEF 2012). Developmental readiness can also be defined as a state, when a child possesses the skills for physical development, intellectual up growth, social and emotional progress that are essential for accomplishment in school and for subsequent schooling and life (Sylva 2003). Developmental readiness primarily includes physical readiness, cognitive readiness, socio-emotional readiness and self-help readiness. This is also termed as non-academic readiness.

In India, Early Childhood Education (ECE) for children below 6 years is currently globally acknowledged as a sound asset, not only for its contribution towards widespread completion of primary education, but also for lifelong learning and overall development. Way back in 1986, the National Policy on Education recognized and incorporated ECE as the first step in the education hierarchy. It was visualized as a comprehensive program for children below 6 years of age which aims to help children to develop a smooth foundation for their all round development and prepare them for primary school (Kaul & Sankar 2011).

Education is the prime social infrastructure and is the basic human capital for economic and social

development. According to the Education for all (EFA) Global Monitoring Report (2007), the consensus from research is that school readiness encompasses development in five distinct but interconnected domains; i.e. cognitive development, physical development – fine and gross motor development; social and emotional development; approach to learning; language development; self-help skill and general knowledge" (NCERT 2005). Some of the major components of developmental readiness used for assessment of teachers in this study are –Physical Readiness (Gross and Fine Motor readiness), Cognitive Readiness, Socio-emotional Readiness and Self-Help skills of the child.

Teachers are the most decisive part in building a framework of an effective school for the child. Both parents and teachers can help children learn various concepts by indulging in doing various activities which foster their interest. Teachers with early childhood training are expected to be more equipped and effective in understanding the children better, they help children to undergo the transition with much ease and comfort and they are more often expected to provide developmentally appropriate experiences in classroom (Britto *et al* 2012).

A teacher's understanding of children's best approach to learning knows that best practices will engage children into the learning environment. Parents, who want the best for their child struggle with the educational jargon, and want the basics for which they can gauge their own child's progress. Educators recognize how valuable parents are as a support or extension of the teacher and create a partnership so the child can have a positive experience in kindergarten (Lee 2013).

However, Keruwala (2013) reported that even though India has undoubtedly done a great job in enrolling a majority of the children in schools, but the challenge lies in keeping the drop-out ratio to minimum and imparting quality education to children that would lead them to a dignified employment in the future. He also reported various reasons for the massive gap between the quality and number of teachers in government schools. The reasons reported were excessive non teaching duties given to the teachers like conducting surveys, facilitating polling during elections and various other activities which are compulsory for them to abide by, absenteeism of teachers, incompetent teacher training programmes, lack of infrastructure facilities, incompetency of teachers and lack of capacity building initiative by teachers. If teachers are prepared to welcome children for formal education they can meet the needs of the child not only through materialistic things but both by verbal and non-verbal interaction. Verbally by reciprocating their concerns, supporting them, bucking them up and non verbally by looking at them with a smile, pleasing them, talking to them in a calm and pleasant tone. It is also observed that, the overall quality of children in classroom is dependent on the fact that how much the teacher is ready to support children.

Keeping this in mind the present research paper, 'knowledge of rural and urban government school teachers regarding development readiness' has been planned.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The present study was based upon a sample of 100 teachersteaching Class-I students, drawn equally from rural and urban schools of Ludhiana district. The teachers were equally distributed according to their locales (50rural and 50urban). For selection of the sample, list of Government Primary Schools of Ludhiana district was procured from the official website of the District Education Officer, Ludhiana. For rural sample: seven Government Primary Schools were purposively selected from the Block - I of Ludhiana district. For urban sample: one zone i.e. zone D was purposively selected from the Ludhiana district. Out of these selected rural and urban schools, the required numbers of teachers were randomly selected for the data collection.

Self-Structured Teachers Knowledge Questionnaire was prepared to evaluate knowledge of rural and urban teachers across various domains of developmental readiness. The total scores obtained were divided equally across three levels of teacher's knowledge i.e. high, average and poor. The questionnaire with statements relating to developmental readiness expected to be achieved by students' of Class-I was given to the advisory committee members for assessing the content validity of the statements. After incorporating suggestions from the committee, 5 open ended questions were finalized. The questionnaire was prepared in Punjabi vernacular and pretested on 5 teachers each from rural and urban settings which were excluded from the final sample.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1: Comparison of Knowledge of Rural and Urban Government School Teachers Regarding Developmental Readiness

(n=100)

Levels of Knowledge	Rural (n ₁ = 50)		Urban (n ₂ = 50)		Z-Value
	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	
High	3	6.00	5	10.00	0.83
Average	15	30.00	30	60.00	3.01**
Low	32	64.00	15	30.00	3.40**

** Significant at 1%

Table 1 depicts the overall picture of distribution of the teachers regarding knowledge of developmental readiness. The results showed that 64 per cent of rural teachers were in low level of knowledge and only 6.00 per cent had high level of knowledge regarding the different domains of developmental readiness skills expected to be achieved by Class-I children. In contrast, percentage of urban teachers was found highest (60%) in average level of knowledge followed by low levels of knowledge (15%) and only 10 per cent of them were having high levels of knowledge. The comparison between knowledge levels of rural and urban teachers revealed that urban teachers had better knowledge than rural teachers.

It was further found that percentage of urban teachers (60%) at average level was found significantly ($z = 3.01, p \leq 0.01$) higher than rural teachers (30%). Whereas, the percentage of rural teachers (64%) in low level of knowledge was found significantly ($z = 3.04, p \leq 0.01$) more in number than urban teachers (30%). These differences highlighted that urban teachers being more at average level had better understanding of various developmental readiness domains. Whereas, non-significant results were found in high levels of knowledge of teachers which depicted that very less number of teachers from both the locales had high levels of knowledge regarding the developmental readiness skills that children are expected to achieve as they enter Class-I.

Table 2: Knowledge of Rural Teachers Regarding Developmental Readiness across Different Socio-Personal Variables

(n=50)

Socio Personal Variable	Levels of Knowledge					
	High		Average		Low	
	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Age						
<33 years	0	0.00	7	29.17	17	70.83
33-41 years	2	10.00	6	30.00	12	60.00
>41 years	1	16.67	2	33.34	3	50.00
Educational Qualifications						
Diploma in Elementary	1	11.11	3	33.33	5	55.56

Teacher Training						
B.A. / B.Ed.	2	6.07	8	24.24	23	69.70
M.A. / M.Ed.	0	0.00	4	50.00	4	50.00
Type of Degree Held						
Correspondence	0	0.00	3	25.00	9	75.00
Regular	3	7.84	12	31.58	23	60.52
Teaching Experiences						
≤ 2 years	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
3 – 5 years	1	6.25	2	12.50	13	81.25
≥ 6 years	2	6.45	10	32.25	19	61.30

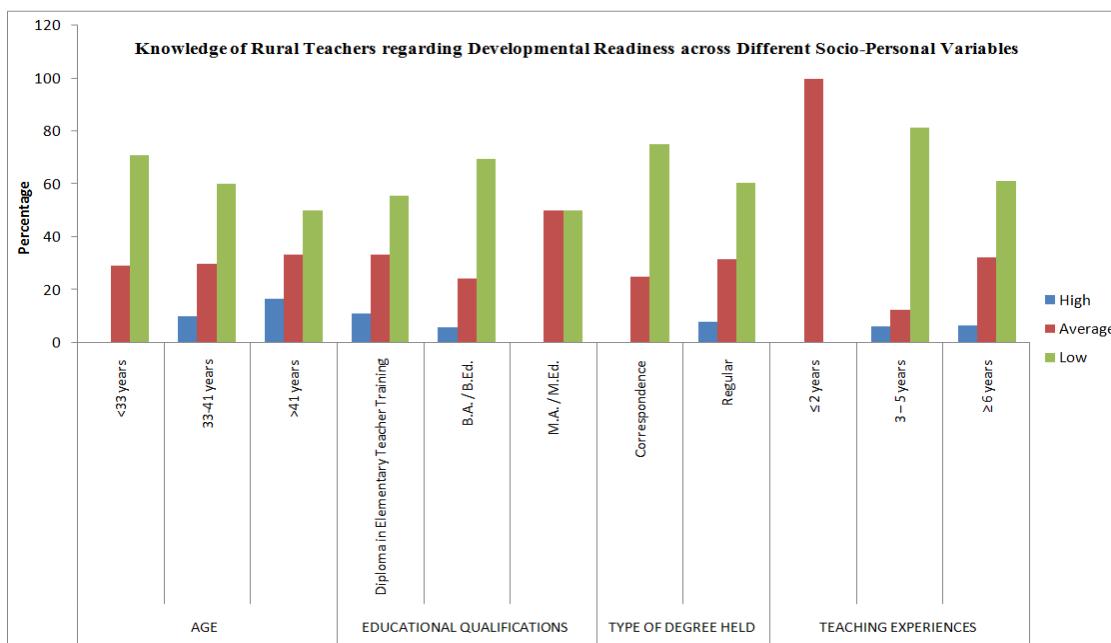


Figure 1

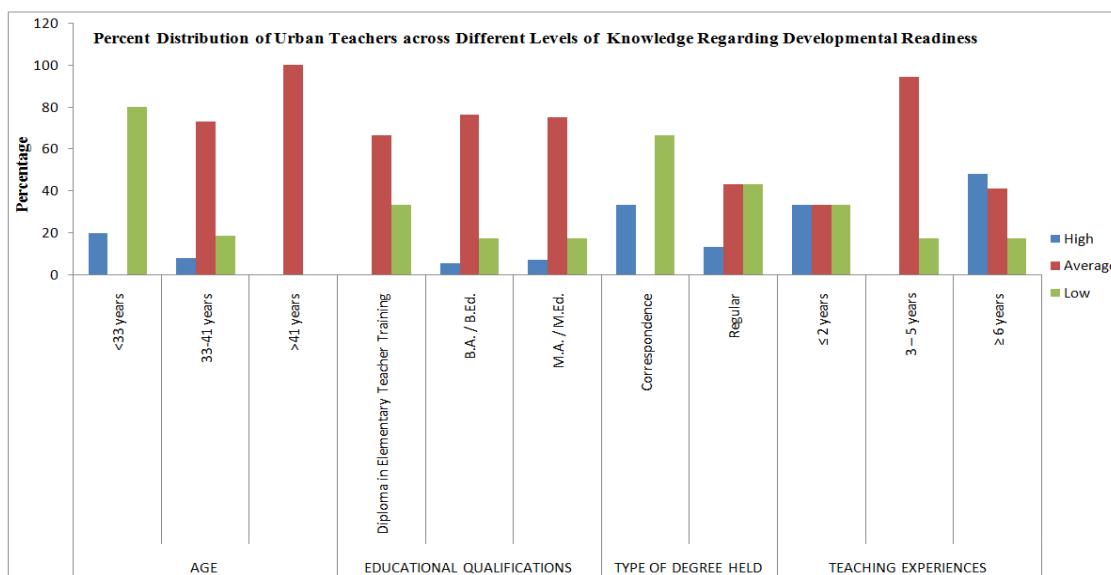


Figure 2

Levels of knowledge regarding developmental readiness of rural teachers across different socio personal variables are depicted in Table 2. As per the data, it was observed that majority (70.83%) of rural teachers who were below 33 years

of age were found to have low levels of knowledge. Whereas, 60.00 per cent of teachers belonging to the age group of below 33 - 41 years of age were having average level of knowledge followed by 50.00 per cent of teachers from the age group of more than 41 years of age were observed to have low level of knowledge, this revealed that irrespective of the age, most of the rural teachers had low knowledge regarding developmental readiness. However, 69.70 per cent of teachers having an educational qualification of B.A. / B.Ed. were found to have average levels of knowledge in developmental skills. While half (50.00%) of the rural teachers who were M.A. / M.Ed., also had low levels of knowledge regarding developmental readiness. 55.56 per cent of teachers who had Diploma in Elementary Teacher Training were also found in the same level of knowledge. 75 per cent of the teachers who had degree through correspondence were found to have low level of knowledge. Whereas, 31.58 per cent of the teachers who had degree through regular type were found to have average level of knowledge indicating that teachers with regular type of degree had a better view and understanding regarding developmental readiness, as compared to the teachers having done their degree in correspondence type. It was highlighted that 81.25 per cent of teacher having a teaching experience of 3-5 years had low levels of knowledge followed by 32.25 per cent of teachers having an experience of more than six years, who had average levels of knowledge.

Table 3: Knowledge of Urban Teachers Regarding Developmental Readiness across Different Socio-Personal Variables

(n=50)

Socio Personal Variable	Levels of Knowledge					
	High		Average		Low	
	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Age						
<33years	2	20.00	0	0.00	8	80.00
33-41 years	3	8.10	27	72.98	7	18.92
>41 years	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Educational Qualification						
Diploma in Elementary Teacher Training	0	0.00	4	66.67	2	33.33
B.A. / B.Ed.	2	5.89	26	76.48	6	17.63
M.A. / M.Ed.	3	7.50	30	75.00	7	17.50
Type of Degree Held						
Correspondence	1	33.33	0	0.00	2	66.64
Regular	4	13.34	13	43.33	13	43.33
Teaching Experience						
≤ 2years	1	33.33	1	33.33	1	33.33
3 – 5 years	0	0.00	17	94.44	1	17.63
≥ 6 years	4	48.28	12	41.38	13	17.50

Table 3 depicts the level of knowledge regarding developmental skills of urban teachers. As per the data observed in the table, it was found that proportion of urban teachers falling under the age group of below 33 years were found to have low level of knowledge (80%), followed by 72.98 per cent of the urban teachers from the age group of 33-41 years having average level of knowledge. However, it was found that, 76.48 per cent of teachers having done their education in B.A. / B.Ed. were found to have average level of knowledge in developmental skills. Similarly, in the domain of type of degree held, 66.64 per cent of the teachers with degree in correspondence were found to have low level of knowledge, whereas percentage of the teachers having done M.A. / M.Ed. were at par in their level of knowledge with 43.33 per cent of teachers equally falling under average and low levels of knowledge. It was highlighted that 94.44 per cent of teachers

having an experience of 3-5 years had average levels of knowledge, followed by 48.28 per cent of teachers having an experience of more than 6 years had high levels of knowledge.

Table 4: Correlation between Socio Personal Variables and Knowledge of Teachers (n=100)

Socio Personal Variables	Knowledge of the Teachers
Age	0.08
Educational Qualification	0.22*
Type of degree held	0.11
Teaching experience	0.39**

** Significant at 1%

* Significant at 5%

Table 4 depicts the correlation between socio personal variables and level of knowledge of teachers regarding developmental readiness. A positive and significant ($r = 0.22$) relationship of educational qualification of teachers and teaching experience was observed with knowledge of the teachers. The results indicated that higher was the educational qualification of teachers and more was the teaching experience, better was the level of knowledge regarding developmental readiness. It could be concluded that teaching experience and higher degree level made a positive contribution.

CONCLUSIONS

The results from the study revealed that teachers from the age group of more than 41 years of age had high levels of knowledge. However, majority of the teachers had low levels of knowledge that were from the age group of below 33 years. Teachers from the urban locale had average level of knowledge with a teaching experience of 3 to 5 years. Followed by teachers who had an experience of more than 6 years had low level of knowledge. Correlation between socio personal profile and knowledge of teachers revealed a positive and significant correlation of educational qualification and teaching experience with knowledge of the teachers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The teachers can play an important role in assisting the need for overall adjustment in formal school settings of children, by focusing on developmental readiness skills along with academic readiness skills.

- The results of the present study highlighted the need to spread awareness among teachers regarding the need for developmental readiness in children, and its contribution in smooth transition of children to formal school setting.
- Teachers need to be sensitized about the developmental needs of children, and ways by which they can enhance the different domains of developmental readiness.
- Teachers must be made aware on how they can develop these skills through resources available.
- The concepts related to developmental readiness in children must be included in B.Ed. and all teachers training programme curriculum.

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